

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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42

ACTION OES-04

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 PRS-01 PA-01 MC-02

ERDA-05 H-02 PM-03 ACDA-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-07 NRC-05 FEAE-00 DODE-00 USIA-06

INT-05 COME-00 ERDE-00 SIL-01 LAB-04 /094 W

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P 171330Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4565

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL DURBAN PRIORITY

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG PRIORITY

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 0438

DEPT PLEASE PASS: ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS PRIORITY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, TECH, SF

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN URANIUM ENRICHMENT PLANT

REF: A) STATE 086137; B) DAR ES SALAAM 1098 (NOTAL)

1. REVIEW OF STATEMENT MADE BY PRIME MINISTER VORSTER ON APRIL 7 IN WHICH HE ANNOUNCED BEGINNING OF OPERATION OF VALINDABA URANIUM ENRICHMENT PLANT FAILS TO PROVIDE ANY EVIDENCE THAT ANNOUNCEMENT WAS TIMED TO COINCIDE WITH OAU MINISTERIAL MEETING OR MEANT AS IMPLICIT THREAT OF SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR POTENTIAL AS VILLIFIED IN TANGOV DAILY NEWS (REFTEL B).

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2. INSTEAD STATEMENT (TEXT FOLLOWS IN SEPTTEL) CONVEYS

IMMENSE SENSE OF SELF-CONGRATULATORY PRIDE IN SOUTH AFRICAN TECHNOLOGY. IT WAS THIS GLOWING SELF-PRAISE THAT APPARENTLY MOTIVATED BORSTER TO TALK ON ISSUE AS FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS WHEN PARLIAMENT RETURNED FROM ITS EASTER RECESS ON MONDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 7. ACCORDING TO VORSTER'S STATEMENT, THE PLANT HAD COME INTO OPERATION ON SATURDAY, ONLY TWO DAYS PREVIOUSLY. THERE IS NOTHING IN VORSTER'S WORDS, NOR INDEED IN THE CONSIDERABLE DOMESTIC PRESS COVERAGE GIVEN THEM, CONCERNING NUCLEAR WEAPONS OR SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENSE CAPABILITIES.

3. SAG HAS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS RECENTLY STATED THAT IT WILL FIGHT TO DEFEND ITSELF IF "DETENTE" FAILS. HOWEVER, ITS GENERAL LINE HAS BEEN ONE WHICH EMPHASIZES ITS OWN REASONABLENESS AS A MEANS OF AIDING ITS BLACK PARTNERS IN RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT NEGOTIATIONS TO GAIN ACCEPTANCE FOR THEIR PACIFIC APPROACH. IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT VORSTER AND FONMIN MULLER WOULD BELIEVE THAT A THREAT OF NUCLEAR BLACKMAIL WOULD ENHANCE THE "MODERATES" POSITION AT OAU MEETING. THOUGH WE CANNOT STATE SO WITH TOTAL ASSURANCE, IT APPEARS TO US THAT VORSTER'S ANNOUNCEMENT WAS BORN OUT OF BUBBLING PRIDE AND NOT RELATED TO OAU MEETING, IN ANY WAY, MUCH LESS MEANT AS A THREAT.
EDMONDSON

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED.

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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05 JUL 2006

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